

2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT



METIS CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



**METIS CHILD, FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY INC.**



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Vision Statement

The Métis family and community is the cornerstone of our Nation and is built upon love, respect, honour, strength and heritage.

Mission Statement

Métis families and communities have the right and responsibility to care for children. Metis Child, Family and Community Services will work to strengthen the capacity of families to care for children through culturally relevant community- based programs. We believe in the inherent strength of our families and in the need to build on the capacity of our community to care for and nurture Métis children.

Guiding Principals

1. Métis families and communities are the cornerstone of the Métis Nation and the service delivery system must reflect this vision.
2. Responsibility for decision-making regarding Métis children and families lies with the family, extended family and community whenever possible.
3. The organizational structure promotes and supports community governance at all levels.
4. The service delivery system will encompass both formal and informal elements.
5. The service delivery system must be operated in an efficient and effective manner.
6. The service delivery system will be outcome based and will reflect the core guiding principles of MCFCS.

GREETINGS

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

President David Chartrand

The Red River Métis have always cared deeply about the health and wellbeing of our children and families. The Red River Métis are among the world leaders in Indigenous child and family services thanks to the vision of our Ancestors and Elders and the values they instilled in us and shaped our culture and Nation. Thanks to these values, the importance of staying connected to our family and community has been instilled in us since we were children.

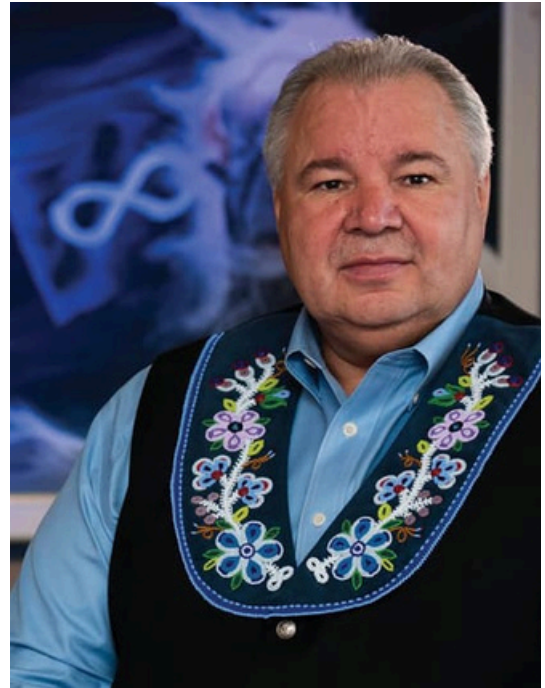
On July 6, 2021, the MMF signed a landmark Métis Self-Government agreement that immediately recognizes the MMF as the National Government of the Red River Métis. This agreement, among other things, acknowledges that our inherent right to self-government includes child and family services and our ability to make laws that relate to the delivery of child and family services. The MMF and Canada are taking steps towards finalizing a Modern Treaty that uses the July 6, 2021 agreement as a base to build upon. This will be a significant next step that will further entrench our collective inherent right of self-government and self-determination over the future of our families.

Indeed, these are exciting times for your Métis Government as we continue to build upon the vision of Métis leaders that have come before us. I would like to extend my sincerest thank you to the Metis Child, Family and Community Services Board of Directors, chaired by Chairperson Shirley Langan, and staff, led by Executive Director Greg Besant, for their hard work and dedication to support your Metis Government as we enter into this new era of child and family services.

I would especially like to thank Minister Mona Buors for her experience, guidance, and leadership she brings to her role as Minister of Métis Child and Family Services.

Meeqwetch,

David Chartrand, President
Manitoba Metis Federation



MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Minister Mona Buors

I am incredibly proud of the Métis, Child, Family and Community Services (MCFCS) of the work that it has been able to undertake over the past year. MCFCS is already renowned across Canada for its ability to provide strong, culturally appropriate services and over the past year they have been able to continue to grow this reputation. Your Métis Government not only recognizes MCFCS' leadership in the field, but appreciates the hard work that it has taken to get to this point.



As you know, the Red River Métis have always deeply valued forming strong connections with our loved ones and communities. We see these values exemplified in the day-to-day commitment made by MCFCS to ensuring our families remain connected. MCFCS truly goes above and beyond to ensure that their policies and practices are forward thinking and meet the standards expected by our People.

Thanks to the experience and knowledge of MCFCS staff, MMF is a national leader when it comes to implementing An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families.

By way of an update, Our Coordination Agreement discussions with Manitoba and Canada are still ongoing to fully return the jurisdiction and authority to care for our children, youth, and families back to us. Every day we are getting closer and closer to completing these discussions and I look forward to a day, in the near future, where we are able to implement our own laws and our own policies that are designed for the Red River Métis, by the Red River Métis.

This progress would not be possible without the dedication of the MCFCS staff, led by Executive Director Greg Besant. I sincerely thank each and every staff person for their hard work and dedication. I would like to also thank Chairperson Shirley Langan and the rest of the MCFCS Board of Directors for their guidance and wisdom as we continue our path forward.

Merci,

Mona Buors, Minister of Métis Child and Family Services
Manitoba Metis Federation

MÉTIS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AUTHORITY

Chief Executive Officer
Karla Hildebrand-Eden

On behalf of the Metis Child and Family Services Authority and our Board of Directors, we would like to commend the Metis Child, Family and Community Services Agency for their commitment and hard work throughout 2022.

This agency's dedication to Métis children, youth, and families continues to overcome stereotypes of traditional Child and Family Services' models and proves, time and time again, that collaborative and family-led practices are the best ways in which we can prepare and nurture our youth for their futures.



I would like to thank the dedicated staff at the agency who go above and beyond in providing what our children need. Whether that be supporting children and youth at home to enable the continuation of their studies via remote learning, connecting youth to their Métis culture, or giving them the tools to have a seamless transition into adulthood.

I would like to give a special thanks to the Executive Director, Greg Besant, his management team, and the Board of Directors who work tirelessly on improving how this agency provides child and family services to our children, youth, and families.

Respectfully,

Karla Hildebrand-Eden, Chief Executive Officer
Métis Child & Family Services Authority

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greg Besant

It is my pleasure to present the annual report of Metis Child, Family and Community Services for the 2021- 2022 fiscal year. Having the opportunity to present to the public the incredible work of our agency staff is always humbling for me. The success stories told in the numbers and in the quotes from the families we walk alongside of always make me pause to reflect on how we can do even better while being thankful for what we have accomplished. If you read nothing else in this report, please take a moment to look at the quotes from the families that are interspersed throughout the report. Their words, their stories, their successes are the truest measures of our own success.

This past year was the third consecutive year we all had to find ways to cope with a changed world. It was also a year in which we began to take concrete steps towards assuming a mandate from our own Métis government. We hold great hope that we will be able to bring about both immediate and ongoing improvements in supporting Métis families in a renewed system.

I would like to thank the executive team of MCFCS, especially Scott Maksymyk for stepping into the role of Assistant Executive Director while my own attentions were focussed on working towards the Métis government mandate. He did more than just keep the wheels on. He helped drive the continuous improvements in the outcomes we are seeing. I would also like to especially thank Board Chairperson Shirley Langan and the Board of Directors for giving me the opportunity to fully participate in the work towards a Métis government mandate. Your trust and confidence in the executive of the agency is deeply felt.

Finally, I wish to thank the Métis Government, President Chartrand, Minister Buors, the Metis Child Family and Services Authority and their Board of Directors for their support and leadership over the past year.

Thank you,

Greg Besant, Executive Director
Métis Child, Family and Community Services Agency



MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD

Shirley Langan



I am pleased to share with you the 2021-22 Annual Report on behalf of the Metis Child, Family and Community Services Board of Directors. This report highlights the priorities and accomplishments of the agency and, more importantly, highlights the accomplishments of the families that we serve. Delivering on our mission and vision of strengthening the capacity of families to care for their children and live healthier lives proved more important this year than ever before.

These results were made possible by the determination, commitment and resilience of our Metis Child, Family and Community Services staff and management, particularly as the effects of the pandemic continued to ripple through all of our lives. The Board and I continue to be inspired by the meaningful outcomes for families, while staff were trying to balance the responsibilities and challenges of maintaining their own lives and their families' well-being. We sincerely thank our Executive Director, Greg Besant, the Executive Management team, and all the agency staff for the relentless work that you do!

We would like to thank and acknowledge the Manitoba Métis Federation for the support that they have always shown to us. President Chartrand and his team of Cabinet Ministers continue to be innovative in the ways that they support families and our Métis Nation. We are also particularly grateful for the support and guidance provided to us by Minister Mona Buors, whose wisdom continues to help guide and support us.

We would also like to acknowledge the Chief Executive Officer of the Metis Child and Family Services Authority, Karla Hildebrand-Eden, and her team for their support and efforts to ensuring that we have the best child welfare services possible. And a special thanks to Madam Chairperson, Barbara Bruce, who has been instrumental in our forward movement.

The Board of Directors looks forward to another great year of collaboration and innovation. We have come a long way in our journey, but we know we must continue on the path of compassionate and transformative work for our Metis children and families into the future!

Thank you,

Shirley Langan, Board Chair
Métis Child, Family and Community Services Agency Board of Directors

OUR BOARD



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Interlake

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South East

Honouring Elder Marcella Vezina

The MCFCS Board of Directors would like to honour Marcella Vezina for her tireless dedication to the betterment of our organization. Marcella has provided inspiration, motivation and encouragement throughout her years of service as a member of the Board of Directors, and now her continued service as the Board Elder. Your contributions to the Board of Directors and to the Agency are greatly valued and highly respected. Thank you for all that you do!



AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

This has been an exciting year for Métis Child, Family and Community Services (MCFCS.) In January 2020, Bill C-92 “An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families” was passed and MCFCS has been hard at work alongside the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) to create legislation that will benefit the families and children that we serve. As that is occurring, we continue to shift our practice to focus on family-led decision making and improving our case practice model to greater empower families and to ensure that children have the greatest connection and attachment possible to their families and communities.

01 Continuing Care

Despite the restrictions of COVID, we have continued to make efforts in every way possible for connections to continue and ensured that families had access to services that meet their particular needs

02 RESP'S and RDSP'S

An increase in the children receiving RDSP's and RESP's

03 All My Relations

In this year, we have had 133 staff attend All My Relations training – a training focused on increasing connection to family & community – numerous others within the agency have gone on to complete additional coaching sessions or became a coach themselves in this practice

04 Decreasing Protection Files

We have continued our trend of year over year, decreasing the number of Protection files that we have open and increasing the number of Voluntary Family Service files

05 Decreasing Apprehensions

A year over year decrease in apprehensions leading to an almost 50% reduction in apprehensions over 5 years!

06 Agreements with Young Adults

We have seen a large increase in the number of Agreement with Young Adults (AYA), which means that more young adults are continuing to receive services after the age of 18

07 Métis Connect Program

The continued and increased use of our Metis Connect program, which helps facilitate family meetings and family-led decision making

YEAR AT A GLANCE

YEAR AT A GLANCE

2021-2022 Statistics

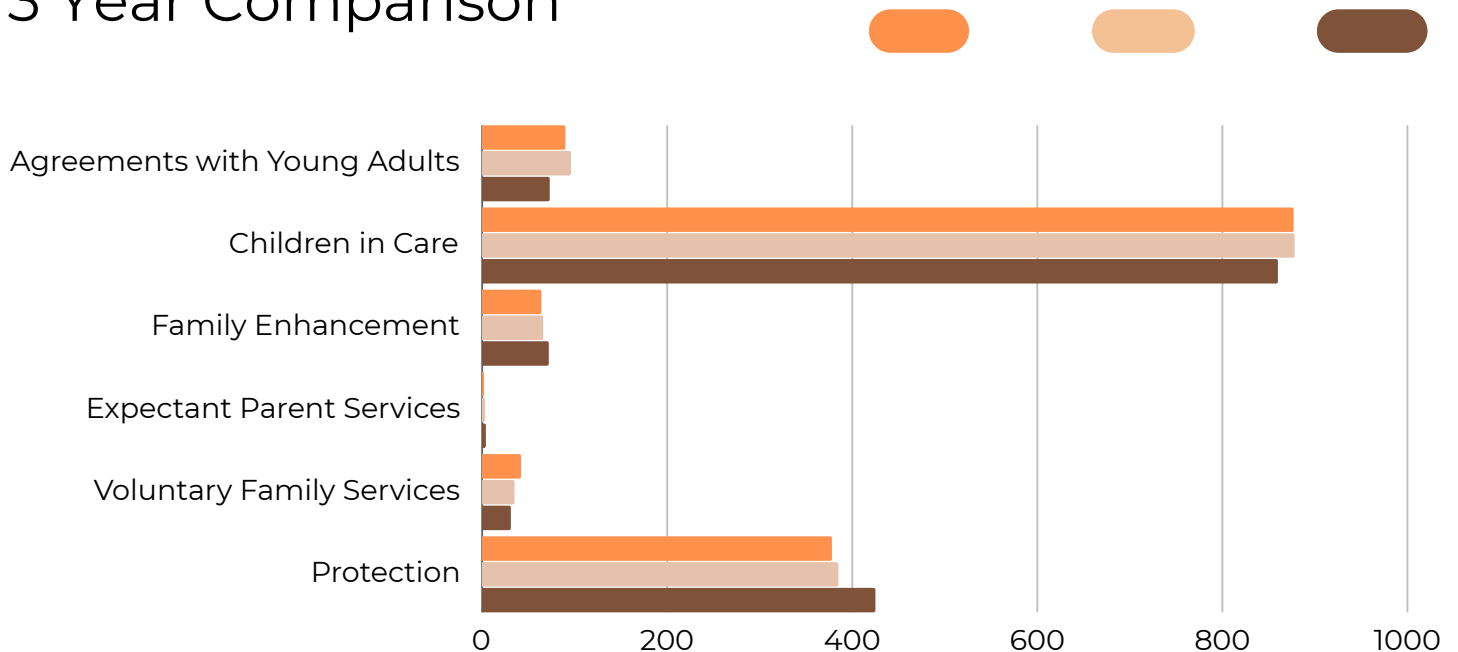
Regions	Protection	Voluntary Family Services	Expectant Parent Services	Family Enhancement	Children in Care	Agreements with Young Adults	Total Cases
Eastman	21	1	0	0	159	6	187
Interlake	11	1	0	0	128	24	164
Winnipeg	346	40	2	64	590	66	1108
Total	378	42	2	64	877	96	1459

"Having peer support workers who have lived experience with addictions or CFS involvement is helpful. It feels like they can be trusted because they have some understanding about what this experience is like."

- Mom involved in CART Program

3 Year Comparison

2021-2022 2020-2021 2019-2020



MÉTIS CONNECT

PROGRAMME CONNECT DE MICHIF

The goal of the Métis Connect Program is to support staff with a shift in practice where MCFCS staff consistently honor and welcome family and community as partners in support, planning and decision-making for their children. In the last four years, this shift in practice (new way of being with families) has decreased the number of apprehensions by 50%.

For children who are already in care, the team works with staff to increase children's connections to family, community and culture to ensure the children have and feel a lifelong sense of belonging.

The role of the Métis Connect Mentor is to coach and mentor MCFCS workers in a "Family Seeing" way of being with families which includes searching for, connecting with and welcoming family and community as partners in the planning and decision-making for their children. The approach involves authentic and humble engagement. In an effort to ensure the practice of humble connection with families on their healing journey and to ensure that families are consistently welcomed to participate in planning and decision making.

While the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the number of in-person network gathering that MCFCS Agency has been able to facilitate, we remain proud of the adaptation to virtual gatherings the families and the Agency were able to make and that there was no pause in the welcoming of families or gatherings.

The Métis Connect Program continues to be recognized as a valuable and inclusive practice approach by other child serving organizations within and outside of Manitoba.

As child welfare workers we are on our own journey of reconciliation. One of the steps that Agency staff and colleagues can take is being mindful of the language used when speaking and writing about the families we are responsible to care about.



One of our Metis Connect Mentors has had the pleasure of walking alongside a group of siblings who reconnected after not having a relationship with each other over the past 10 years. The referral to Metis Connect started with an 18 year old female who wanted to know her family. She was aware she had siblings but did not know who they were, where they were or how many existed. She was residing with her one brother (age 16) with a long term Agency foster parent. The Metis Connect Mentor discovered there were 7 maternally connected siblings in care. Most of the caregivers and youth/children were not even aware of everyone else's existence, despite being in care within the same Agency from birth or early childhood.

Over the course of a few months, the Mentor walked alongside the young adult and the caregivers of the other children to overcome a variety of barriers to reconnecting. The young adult was invaluable in this network and was often the voice of her siblings despite not knowing them. She powerfully stated "we didn't choose to be in care and we didn't choose to not be together. We should be able to know each other". She acknowledged loving and caring about her own long term caregiver but also that she had space in her life for more family and more love. Eventually, the caregivers and children all gathered in person to finally meet and get to know one another. The young adult described the experience as "awesome" and said that it has given her the confidence to move forward with maintaining contact and relationships with her siblings. The caregivers have also come to know one another and will be moving forward with supporting the young adult and children in maintaining connections with each other.

FAMILY ENHANCEMENT

FAMILY ENHANCEMENT

L'AIDE POUR FAMILLES



The MCFCS Family Enhancement (FE) team walks alongside families who come to the attention of the agency as they may be struggling to parent their children. The team connects with the family and explores what may work best for the family to help them heal and work through their struggles as their children remain at home. The FE team is trauma-sensitive and recognizes that all families have strengths, wisdom and natural support networks.

The FE workers, either on their own or with the assistance of one of our Metis Connect Mentors, facilitate network gatherings, welcoming identified family and community members who come together to offer support to the children and family. If children become unsafe at home for a period of time, the team turns to the family network to care for the children and support an ongoing relationship with the parents.

The FE team has a cultural worker who gently engages with families who desire cultural teachings or supports. The cultural worker also facilitates sharing circles for families and staff and will also offer families or staff opportunities to participate in smudging ceremonies.

The FE team also has a Family Mentor who provides hands-on support to the families, by way of assisting them to find and connect with resources, assisting with parenting strategies and general support needed as identified by the family.

Power of a Cultural Worker

A case manager and cultural worker met in the home of a family they were walking alongside. The mom and her sister were both present. Initially, the two seemed leery of the worker and the cultural worker. The sisters talked about their previous experiences with CFS as children and talked about their fear of the power that CFS held. When they were assured that the FE workers were just there to find out how they can support the family, both talked about how they had been working on learning about their history and culture. They also became very vulnerable and shared a traumatic story about their history that the workers had never heard. Everyone wept, including the workers. The mom and her sister asked the cultural worker to do a teaching. When the workers were leaving, all hugged and the family asked the cultural worker if she would do ongoing spiritual counselling for the family. Both expressed gratitude for how different this interaction with CFS felt.

MÉTIS CART PROGRAM

CHIM DE RESPONSE D'ADDICTION COMMUNAUTAIRE

Métis Community Addiction Response Team

For the 2021/22 fiscal year, the agency continued to receive provincial funding for a portion of the Métis Community Addiction Response Team (Métis CART). The funding is from the Canada-Manitoba Home and Community Care and Mental Health and Addictions Services Funding Agreement to support stronger mental health and addictions services in Manitoba.

MCFCFS recognizes that intergenerational trauma impacts parenting. Parents who have experienced trauma often struggle with substance misuse and mental wellbeing. As the majority of referrals MCFCFS receives center around parents not being able to safely parent due to these struggles, the Métis CART project continued the wrap around services and early intervention.

This program is an early intervention service program for approximately 30 families at any given time with co-occurring parental substance misuse and/or mental health struggles and child abuse or neglect issues. The program pairs a Family Services Worker with a Peer Mentor (a person who has lived mental health or addiction experience) to work collaboratively with addictions and mental health treatment resources (who are members of the Métis CART team) towards providing intensive support, treatment, and child welfare services. Whenever it is possible and safe, the program keeps children in their homes while parents work toward healing.

The Métis CART team also works closely with our Métis Connect team to ensure that family and community are welcomed to participate in network gatherings where they are able to talk about how they can support the family. If children become unsafe at home for a period of time, the team turns to the family network to care for the children.

Services of the Agency's cultural worker are also available to the families involved in the Métis CART project.

"It's refreshing to have someone to talk to each week. They help you go over the things in your life. You are slowly understanding why you are the way you are. They help you understand why things might frustrate you".

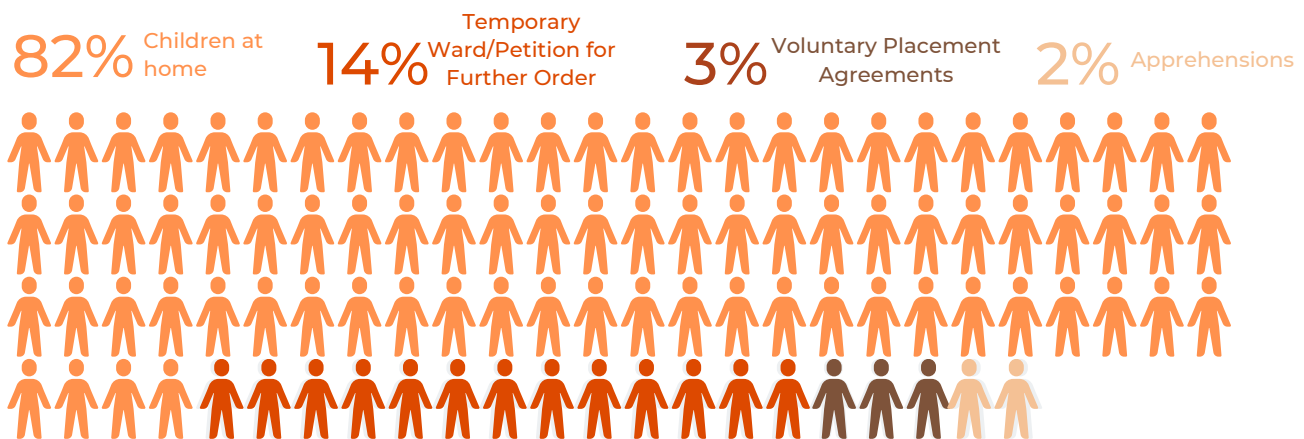
"I very much recommend the CART program for anyone I come across who are struggling with addiction and have children. It needs to continue. This city really needs it. People need someone they can rely on and not fear that they will come in and their kids will be another statistic. They truly do help and want the best for you and your children. They believe in reconciliation. This is important, they believe in bringing families together rather than ripping them apart"

FAMILY SERVICES

FAMILY SERVICES LI SERVICES DI FAMILLES

Through 2021-2022 we have continued to feel the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the families and children we walk alongside. These impacts continued to impact the availability and access to community resources, and increased challenges for families and children. Family Services staff have walked alongside families in a variety of ways which included virtual gatherings, in-person meetings while maintaining distance, or outside and check-ins over phone or social media. Family Services workers and families were able to continue to engage with each other to ensure support and safety.

The 2021-2022 year has demonstrated the ongoing commitment within the Agency at the point of frontline service to work to preserve families being together, and to work with extended family and community to ensure safety. In line with the Agency's Mission and Vision, Family Services also embodies the practice of family connections and engagement throughout our involvement with a family. This includes a focus on the strengths of a family, bringing community and family together to collaborate in decision making and creating plans with families. Of the families Family Services was working alongside, we were supporting 82% of those families to care for their children.

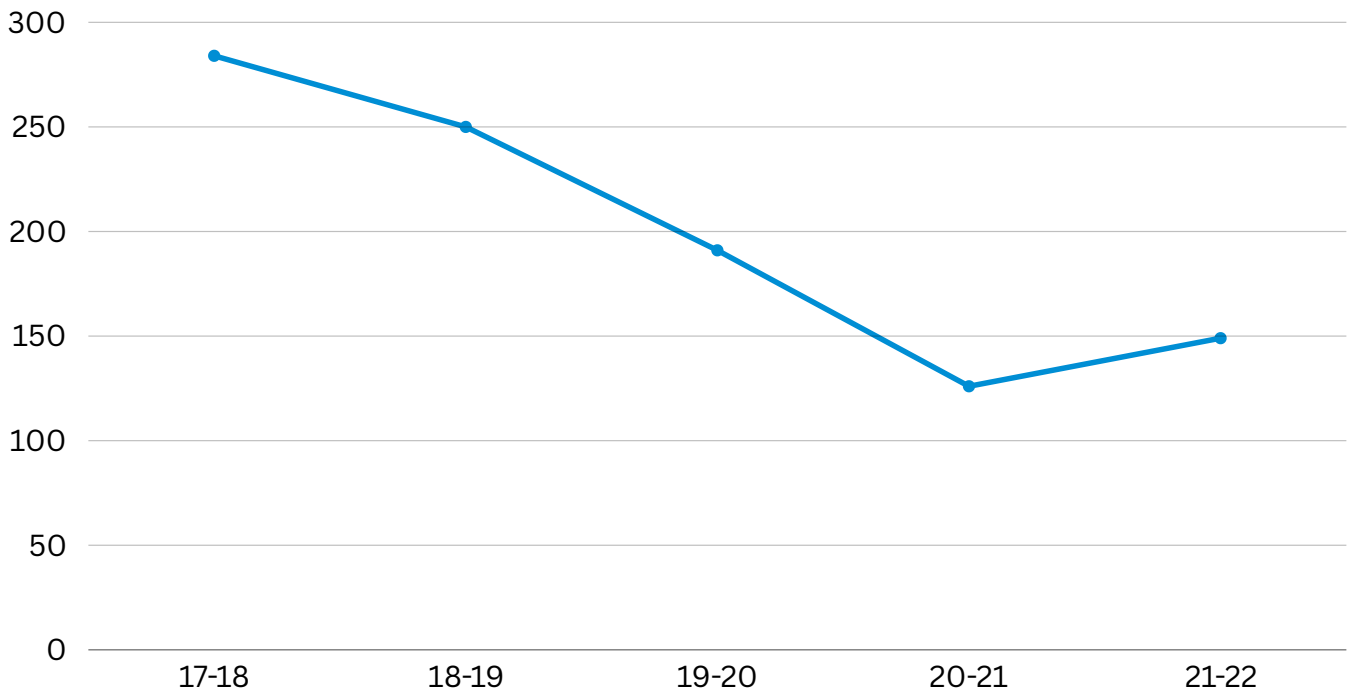


Seeing the true strength of the families and communities we walk alongside is an honour for us to witness and it is demonstrated statistically in the continued trend of decreased apprehensions, increases in the number of family gatherings to plan together to keep children with their families, and increases in family placements.

Over the past five (5) years the key driver to change within the Métis Child Welfare system has been a dedicated focus to increase the voice and power of families and children within the child welfare system. We have developed our practice framework through the All My Relations Training and the assistance of our Metis Connect unit.

The result of this is that over the past five (5) years we have reduced child apprehensions by 50%.

Apprehensions Over Five Years



Apprehensions Over Five Years

If we had continued our apprehensions at the same rate that we did in 2017/18 until this point, there would be an additional 420 children in care over the past 4 years! That's 420 children that are remaining in their homes with their families thanks to the hard work, planning, passion and empathy of our staff and their way of being with families.

420

Children that are remaining in their homes with their families

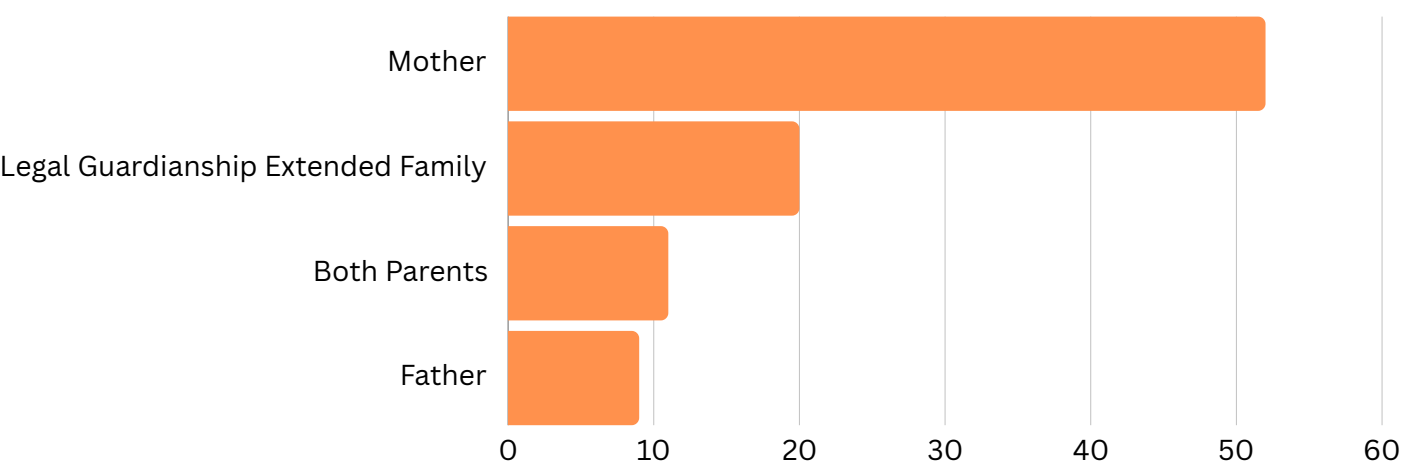
Family Services has celebrated many successes over this year of children being able to return home to parents, of helping to develop family networks for children and their parents to support them in being successful beyond our involvement and to work alongside parents who are struggling to come up with plans together that will be helpful to the parents and their family to keep their children safe.

REUNIFICATION AND LEGAL PERMANENCY

A child in care may be reunified with a parent at any point in the child’s time in care, regardless of the type of order in place. Also, some families choose to have another family member or acknowledged family member take guardianship so they are not raised in care.

In total, 92 children were reunified with families in 2021-2022, either through a return to one or both of the parents, or the child experiencing legal permanency with family through guardianship.

Number of Children Reunified or Legal Guardianship with Family



Types of Legal Orders Across Agency

Regions	Permanent Ward	Temporary Ward / Petition Filed for Further Order	Transitional Planning (Agreements with Young Adults)	Voluntary Placement Agreement	Apprehension	Total
Eastman	148	9	6	2	0	165
Interlake	123	4	24	1	0	152
Winnipeg	460	104	66	21	5	656
Agency	731	117	96	24	5	973

FAMILY SUPPORT

FAMILY SUPPORT SUPPORT POUR LA FAMILLE



In keeping with the vision to better support our families, rather than have children come into care, Family Support has been shifting its focus in the past year to working with families whose children remain in their home. By building relationships and offering added levels of support, we hope to resolve problems earlier and reduce trauma to children and families. In our work with families we have been busy connecting them to food banks, helping them access community meal programs, teaching them how to find the most affordable food in their area. As well as, connecting families with free community programming, mental health supports, and helping with goal setting for maintaining their home.

It is, however, still extremely important that children in care be actively connected to their families of origin and our family support program continues to support this by supporting family members in the time that they spend with their children who are in agency care. During this supported family time our staff help with teaching parents how to connect with their children through play and communication, as well as helping them set boundaries and ensuring that their children feel safe. Most of the Family Support Program service is still focused on Supported Family Time.

In the past year, the family support program ran the Circle of Security Parenting Group on three (3) occasions and did a one-to-one session with one (1) mom. A total of 15 families benefited from this program. This program is an attachment based program that focuses on how parents can connect with their children in order to increase their sense of safety and security.

Butterfly Program

PAPILLION

This program was relaunched this year after not being able to provide it due to COVID-19. It is offered to our families that are actively in the reunification process or in the Live In Family Enhancement (LIFE) Program. If reunification is no longer possible, we focus on how do we make each family time meaningful and strengthen their existing attachment. Family Support staff are assigned to a family for a duration of 12-20 weeks alongside an Attachment Therapist from HeartStories Unlimited Attachment Therapist Unlimited. During this time, the family works along with their family support worker and therapist to build and strengthen their attachment with their child(ren). Each week the family is recorded, with the parent, family support worker, and therapist watching the video immediately afterward. The family support worker leads the discussion with guidance from the therapist and provides feedback about the family interaction in the video. Then activities are introduced that will enhance and promote attachment between parents and their children. These activities are worked on throughout the week as “homework”.

The whole basis of the model is to be strength-based and provide parents with positive feedback. We always want to build off the existing strengths of the parents and continue to encourage parents to work on their parent/child attachment.



Christmas Hampers

In December of 2021, the family support staff, with the financial support of the MMF President’s office shopped, organized and delivered 41 Christmas hampers for the families that we serve. Each family that received a hamper were referred by a staff person from the agency and each of those families were shopped for specifically, in terms of children’s ages and interests. In these hampers, gifts, clothing and food for Christmas dinner was provided.

INFINITY CARE

Kinship Care

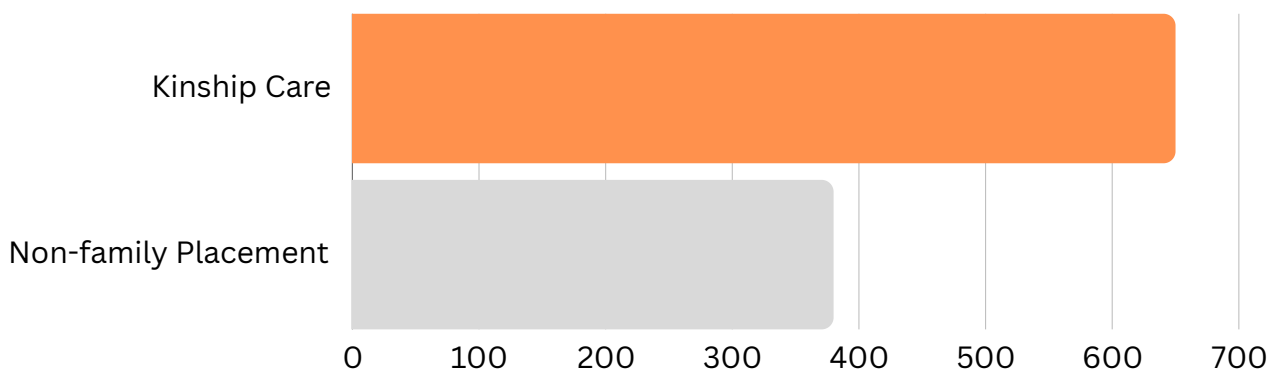
SOINS D'PARENTII

Kinship care is a living arrangement in which children who cannot reside with their parents live full time with a relative or someone from their community. Kinship care is focused on minimizing trauma to children and parents while enhancing the existing skills and connections within the family. Strong families raise strong children. And as our first guiding principle states, “Métis families and communities are the cornerstone of the Métis Nation and the service delivery system must reflect this vision.”

The Kinship Care Program offers support, training, advocacy and resources to approximately 300 kinship homes. Consistent with federal legislation, every effort is made to have children entering care placed with their family. The Kinship Care Program ensures we are keeping children within their family networks, while maintaining and developing an awareness of the strengths and challenges faced by these families. Collectively, the child's worker, the child's family and the Kinship Care Worker, work side-by-side to assist in keeping children within their family networks, while maintaining and developing an awareness of the strengths and challenges faced by these families. By doing so, our kinship care program is able to utilize the valuable wisdom and knowledge that a family possesses and build on it to provide the families with a strengthened ability to deliver the quality of care and close connections that all children need in order to experience future success and happiness.

We pride ourselves on ensuring that we look to the families and communities to care for their children whenever possible. In fact, nearly double the amount of children are placed within the Kinship Care Program versus placement outside of the family with the General Foster Care and Specialized Foster Care Programs.

Children in Care Place in Homes



Live In Family Enhancement (LIFE) Program

The Live In Family Enhancement (LIFE) Program offers a unique option to keep the family together while children are in care. Families are matched with a trained LIFE mentor who acts as a role model and supports, advocates, guides and mentors the parent(s) in order to promote the health and well-being of all family members. The family resides in the LIFE home for at least eight (8) months or as long as needed. The LIFE Mentors coach the parents toward increasing parenting and life skills, attachment, structure and routine and ensures the safety and well-being of children in the program.

In the last year, we regrettably lost two (2) homes giving us a total of four (4) LIFE homes. Our coordinator has been busy restructuring the program from the ground up. Finding mentor parents that are willing to open their home to a family is very difficult. It takes a special person that can open up their life and home. Stay Tuned!!



Foster Care and Specialized Foster Care Program

While our emphasis is on keeping or placing children within their families, there is an ongoing need for general and specialized caregivers – especially Métis caregivers. Far too many of our Métis children in care are being raised outside of their own family and culture.

The General Foster Care and Specialized Foster Care programs are responsible for the recruitment, screening, training, licensing and ongoing support of foster parents who are providing care to children of all ages, with a variety of needs. The General Foster Care Program was able to add much needed emergency beds for our Placement Desk to access. Although more are needed, we continue to recruit for emergency, short and long term homes. For youth needing highly skilled specialized caregivers to support them through, the Specialized Foster Care Program provides customized homes selected for and designed around a child or youth's particular needs. These homes receive enhanced support and training from highly experienced staff.

INFINITY CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

PROGRAMME
D'ENFANTS ET DE JEUNES

The Child and Youth Programs department runs programs throughout the entire year to work alongside children and youth of all ages. These programs focus on health, culture and personal development. Additionally, the Child and Youth Team marks the occasion of all the different holidays by preparing special events with food and activities for all to come together.

Youth Celebration CELEBRATION DE JEUNES

The Children and Youth Team is responsible for one of the agency's most important events - the Age of Majority Celebration. This year 50 youth were celebrated at our 39th Youth Celebration.

Each celebration typically offers youth the opportunity to bring together family of all types, friends and people who have supported them on their journey. No one leaves the celebration without being touched by the experiences of these young people and being struck by the closeness of the relationships that they share with family and supports alike. Each youth honoured receives a gift which includes a piece of Indigenous art, a Métis sash, related write up, a lanyard, customized Infinity hoodie as well as a \$100 gift card. We also give information on our Métis Spirit Programs so they know they are not alone and can come back if they need a helping hand.



Circle of Life CERCLE DE VIE

The Circle of Life Program provides group and one-to-one support for children both in and out of care for those between the ages of seven (7) to 15. Staff recognize that the lives of children involved with us have often been filled with trauma and loss, so the programming promotes resilience and the development of positive and healthy relationships. Staff are goal-oriented and strength-based when working with the unique needs of each child or youth. They encourage youth to develop better communication and conflict resolution skills.

Beyond healthy and fun activities, the team also focuses on cultural and educational components. Children and youth are guided and encouraged to discover their culture and heritage and have taken part in sweats, smudging, sharing circles, cultural crafts and lessons of the sash. They are taught the benefits of incorporating those teachings into their everyday lives while instilling positive values and respect for themselves and others.



Cultural Camp

The two (2,) week-long cultural camps gives up to 15 children each week an opportunity to learn about their Métis history and culture as well as participate in fun activities. This is an annual highlight for both the children and staff involved. Some sites they have visited include Seven Oaks House, the St. James Museum, Lower Fort Garry and The Forks and have included activities such as medicine picking, enjoying Métis games, participating in ceremonies, listening to teachings and getting to sample traditional Métis food. Historically Cultural Camp is offered over two weeks in July and August by the Spirit Helpers Committee, Metis Spirit Program and Children and Youth Program Staff.



Skills for Life LI CONNAISSANCES POUR LA VIE

The Skills for Life Team provides one-to-one and group supports to youth between the ages of 15 to 21. They are goal-oriented and focus on the needs of the youth to prepare them for adulthood. Using cultural, educational and recreational components, staff are able to foster the learning of life skills needed such as budgeting, banking, resume building and job search, nutrition, cooking, personal care and safety. This program assists youth by helping them develop problem-solving skills and navigating other services through nonprofit government programs.

The Skills for Life team utilizes a survey tool consisting of 217 questions covering the areas of hygiene and health, substance use and mental health, nutrition, residence stability, medical, financial, education & career, transportation, baby preparation, child rearing, justice, daily life skills, healthy relationships, family connection & adult support, sexual awareness, community & networking, social interaction, independence and goal achievement, personal aesthetics and self-actualization. Alongside youth, staff work to determine which areas their work should focus on to prepare our young people for independence when they age out of care.

Through continued funding received from the Children's Aid Foundation, we were able to offer therapy/counselling to youth who have aged out of the care of our Agency. They also provide programming alongside the Métis Spirit program. The Children's Aid Foundation and the MMF Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP) program provides financial support for our staff to prepare and present mental health and job readiness programming.

Fiddling and Jigging Groups

LI VIOLON ET LA JIG

Through funding applied for from the MMF, we have been able to offer fiddling and jigging lessons to children involved with the Agency. Utilizing Agency owned fiddles, 10 children and youth can attend virtual or in-person lessons on Thursday evenings. Jigging lessons were also adapted to a virtual platform and have again moved to in-person so no matter where you live children aged five (5) to 12 years old can learn these staples of the Métis Culture.



Little Bears

LI P'TI OURS

Little Bears adds a group element to children and youth receiving services from the Circle of Life program. Little Bears group provides bi-weekly programming to children between the ages of seven (7) to 15. In the past, this group has participated in Métis games, played the spoons, learned to jig and learned about Métis history. They have visited various cultural sites such as The Forks, Seven Oaks House, the St. James and St. Boniface Museums. A favorite activity is “Métis Night” where they make their own bannock dogs from scratch and enjoy traditional foods including stew, pickerel, pea soup, wild rice and blueberry pie.

At each gathering, they have a meal which helps them to focus and enjoy the planned activity. Each evening includes a component related to Métis history and culture which has included smudging and sharing circles when possible. This time together also allows them to form relationships that are not only supportive but trusting. Through this relationship building they are able to create a stability that is critical in helping in other areas of their lives.

Cultural Craft Night LI CRAFTS CULTUREL

The Infinity Circle of Life and Skills for Life teams work together to provide opportunities to learn crafting weekly at the McGregor location. We try to ensure that there is an educational and cultural component to each session. Children and youth make cultural crafts, learn lessons of the sash, learn Michif words and phrases and share a meal. They have worked on beading projects – earrings, key chains, moccasins and mitts. They enjoy painting rocks, canvases and talking sticks; as well as making drums and dream catchers. Our program room holds many examples from our talented artists. Throughout the pandemic staff made and distributed kits for participants and classes were held virtually. By special request we can still offer kits to those who cannot attend in person.



Spirit Helpers Committee COMITII D'AIDE POUR LI ESPRITS

The Spirit Helpers Committee is made up of staff members from different departments and areas within the agency. With the support of Children and Youth Programming Staff, the committee has organized sweat lodge ceremonies, sweet grass, cedar and sage picking for youth and agency staff, giving them the opportunity to learn about medicines and Ceremony for those interested in exploring their culture. This year we are offering “Wellness Workshops” for staff to gather and learn cultural crafts, cooking and teachings they can apply in their service delivery to our youth and families.

The Agency is diligent in ensuring that the culture of our children is considered in every family plan. We continue to use the cultural planning bundle that is a primary focus for our Cultural Worker who is working with children placed in non-culturally appropriate homes.



GROUP CARE RESOURCES

RESSOURCES DE SOINS D'GROUPE

Eagles Nest and Gladys Cook LA MAISON DE GLADYS COOK ET NIQUE D'EAGLE

Eagles Nest and Gladys Cook House are our Agency-operated short and long term placement resources. The staff have been busy building relationships and giving the youth a feeling of stability and commitment. If a youth comes to live in one of our homes during the school year, staff drive them to their school, so that they experience one less change in their lives and so that we keep them connected to their teachers, friends and community. Our Youth Care Workers offer cultural and recreational opportunities such as going to community centres, YMCA, fishing, MCFCS Cultural Camp and many others.

There is also a greater focus on what the youth want, which allows them to be a part of their Care Planning. With increased focus on life skills such as shopping, cooking, meal planning, cleaning and budgeting, our youth will have a greater chance of success moving into adulthood. The staff make every effort to support family visits and involve family members with goal setting or making plans. The pandemic created many challenges for the youth over the past year having to transition to virtual family contact and remote learning. They adjusted well and showed such maturity, understanding and responsibility during an uncertain time. Staff provided any necessary equipment or supplies to maintain family connections, provided assistance with school work and enhanced engagement to minimize the impact on the youth as we all adjusted to a new normal.

We are currently looking for a new home for Gladys Cook House with the help of the MMF Housing Department. Although it is bitter sweet to have to move from a place so many have called home over the years, we are excited for new beginnings.



Rosedale Adolescent Inter-dependant Living Services (RAILS) SVAAR - SERVICES DE VIE AUTONOME POUR LI ADOLESCENTS DE ROSEDALE

Rosedale Adolescent Inter-dependant Living Services (RAILS) is a seven (7) unit/nine (9) bed inter-dependant living program. It supports youth aged 16-21 to live on their own with the support and guidance of staff available on site 24 hours a day. Staff mentor the youth in areas such as: budgeting, proper nutrition, smart shopping, educational support, personal health and hygiene, as well as other independent living skills. Staff provide educational, employment, recreational and cultural activities in the Common Area.

Youth have been participating in the Métis in Motion workshop series provided by our Infinity Child and Youth Program staff. When a youth or young adult leaves RAILS, they are able to receive outreach from staff for up to three (3) months as they move on their own to independent living. The pandemic was incredibly impactful to the progress of the youth at RAILS as programming was put on hold due to public health guidelines and restrictions. The youth were very socially responsible and respectful of following health guidelines doing their part to ensure everyone's safety.



MÉTIS CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY

Métis families and communities have the right and responsibility to care for children. Métis Child, Family and Community Services will work to strengthen the capacity of families to care for children through culturally relevant community-based programs. We believe in the inherent strength of our families and in the need to build on the capacity of our community to care for and nurture Métis children.

CONTACT

2000 Portage Avenue
Tel: 204-927-6960

100 Sutherland Avenue
Tel: 204-697-1118

550 Selch Street
Tel: 204-268-6460

<https://www.metiscfs.mb.ca>
info@metiscfs.mb.ca
[@mcfcsagency](https://www.instagram.com/mcfcsagency)



**MÉTIS CHILD, FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY INC.**